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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/27/2018

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PREL](#) [KCRM](#) [KJUS](#) [IZ](#) [SY](#) [IS](#) [LY](#)

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SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON FOREIGN TERRORIST  
ORGANIZATION, THE PALESTINE LIBERATION FRONT (PLF)

CLASSIFIED BY NEA/RA MICHAEL J. ADLER; E.O. 12958;  
REASONS: 1.4(B) AND (D)

[¶1.](#) (U) This is an action request, see paragraph 4, 9, and  
[¶10.](#)

#### SUMMARY

[¶2.](#) (S/NF) The Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) designation of the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) is subject to a five-year review this year. The Department is collecting and reviewing information about the activities of the PLF from 2003 to the present. A recent intelligence report casts doubt on whether the PLF continues to exist, or whether its remnants have reorganized into a new group or joined other groups already in existence. To assist in the review of this designation, the Department seeks additional information from Posts and host governments. End Summary.

#### OBJECTIVE

[¶3.](#) (C/NF) Under the Immigration and Nationality Act, the Secretary of State is required to review the designation or re-designation as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) of a particular group to determine whether the designation or re-designation should be revoked. This review must be conducted every five years if in that same period no review has taken place pursuant to a petition by an FTO to the Secretary to revoke its FTO designation.

[¶4.](#) (S/NF) Posts are asked to provide any information they have relevant to the PLF's terrorist activities during the period 2003 - 2008, responsive to the questions below. Addressees other than Damascus and Iran RPO Dubai are requested to also seek this information from host governments; Jerusalem is requested to approach the Palestinian Authority. Posts should provide/seek:

-- information on whether the PLF remains in existence (or whether, for example, its membership has been subsumed by successor organizations);

-- information on whether the PLF has engaged in terrorist activities during the period 2003-2008;

-- information on whether the PLF retain the capability and intent to engage in terrorist activity;

-- any other information that host government believes may be relevant to the USG's review of the continued designation of the PLF.

#### BACKGROUND

[¶5.](#) (S/NF) The Palestine Liberation Front is a radical Palestinian group that split from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) in

the late 1970's under the leadership of Muhammad Zaydan, also known as Abu Abbas. The PLF split again into pro-Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), pro-Syrian, and pro-Libyan factions in 1984. Abu Abbas headed the pro-PLO (pro-Arafat) faction. The anti-Arafat faction itself split into two factions, the Talat Yaqub faction and the Abd al-Fatah Ghanim faction.

¶6. (S/NF) According to the 2008 U.S. Intelligence Community assessment titled "Assessing the Palestine Liberation Front as a Foreign Terrorist Organization", the U.S. Intelligence Community, with the exception of DIA, assessed PLF efforts to renew terrorist operations in Israel have diminished, but not entirely ceased, due to the arrest and subsequent death of Abu 'Abbas. Although the group has not carried out a terrorist attack since January 2003, it reportedly planned attacks against Israeli targets and trained operatives for terrorist operations. DIA assessed that the PLF was no longer a functioning terrorist organization and considered the group "lacked cohesive leadership and had lost the capabilities, training resources, recruitment appeal, and state support required to sustain its organizational viability and carry out effective attacks."

¶7. (S/NF) As of February 2003, the PLF was running two-week training courses at a camp near Baghdad in terrorist techniques in preparation for attacks against Israel, according to US military reporting. In May 2003 two PLF members in Israeli custody were directing an attack plan-possibly including a kidnapping-by Fatah Tanzim members, according to Israeli Government reporting.

¶8. (S/NF) According to Palestinian General Intelligence reporting, Iranian support in 2005 to the PLF and other Palestinian groups was part of an effort to establish operational groups within the Palestinian territories. End Background.

¶9. (U) Given the need to expedite the administrative review, Department requests a response by cable to S/CT Michelle A. Arias by June 20, 2008.

¶10. (U) Please contact Michelle A. Arias at (202) 647-2130 or via e-mail, if necessary, for further background information.

¶11. (U) Minimize considered.

RICE